

DORNOCH HERITAGE SCIO
Minutes of Board Meeting, Tuesday 30th January 2024, 10.30am at Whinhill.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Co Chair (AS) welcomed Fiona Hampton as a new Trustee and members introduced themselves to Fiona.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of meeting held on 21st November 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

Proposed Governance Review.

AS explained that in Richard's absence at the last meeting, the matter of having a SCIO Delegation of Authority Policy had not been fully discussed. **It was agreed** that we should prepare a similar, simplified version of the document Richard had circulated, and Fiona H offered to do a draft.

5. Financial Reports

- a. Museum – not available on this occasion however JB reported that the Museum finances were on track for the year end.
- b. SCIO – to be discussed under Heritage Hub funding.

6. SCIO Policies

- a. Equality and Diversity – this had been **agreed** at the previous meeting. To be dated and placed in the Policy Register.
- b. Complaints – as above, to be dated, and with a couple of minor changes this was **agreed**.
- c. Overview/update – Fiona McK explained that she wanted to get the Staff Contract agreed by the Board before reviewing the raft of policies as necessary.

7. Heritage Hub -

a) Funding Update

Alison reported that since the last Board meeting, two more grants had been successful. MGS has awarded us a grant of £42,238 for the Community Curation Project (including two more museum quality cabinets). Highland Council has awarded us a grant of £18,985 from the Community Regeneration Fund to employ an Engagement Officer.

We applied in early January for a grant from SSE for £89,692 to complete several aspects of the Heritage Hub project including future staffing. Awards are to be announced in April.

b) Construction Update including Cashflow

Jerry updated the Board on the Funding of the Heritage Hub, income and expenditure. The total funding available as of now is £654,655 and total cost to complete £654,979. It was noted that the Pot 170 and HIE funding had not yet been received.

The Heritage Lottery grant (£249,431) is a percentage of the total project costs. This grant is paid in stages against invoices submitted, and we can claim the full grant provided we fund the total project.

There is contingency built into the Funding Plan and some aspects of the contract as originally costed are not now needed, so **it was agreed** that this be reviewed going forward to identify if possible, sources of general funds to support the SCIO's sustainability.

Having been delayed by the bad weather and the longer than expected Archaeology survey, the Contractor might now be clear by mid May. We may not be able to open the Museum as hoped on 1st April with consequences for museum income.

8. Civic Room, Golf Area enlargement and refurbishment

Both of these areas are proceeding well in the newly created rooms. Lynne reported that the Civic Room interpretation is complete and on the expanded Golf area, Alison and Lynne are working with the RDGC archivists to share resources and plan jointly where possible. Both of these new exhibition areas will be discussed at the next Museum Committee meeting. The entrance area and two new rooms are in the process of being re-floored and there will be a new, smaller reception desk. Lynne reported that the 'Then and Now' exhibit is being updated.

9. Pinehurst and Tufts Archive Visit

Alison reported on her visit to the Tufts Archive (see Appendix 1) and the relationship between Pinehurst Village, Dornoch town, RDGC and the Museum. There was discussion about how to take forward the relationship. Fiona H suggested a portal could be created and **it was agreed** to pursue this idea, and possibly finance it through the proposed Crowdfunding Campaign in due course. Country Club of NC and Pinehurst are very interested and supportive of Dornoch.

10. Members Newsletter – Winter edition

Lynne was thanked for getting the Winter News Update out to members. The next one will be in Spring.

11. A.O.C.B.

(i) Alison reported that further to the News Update, Wilf Hadley had expressed interest in joining the Board when he retires and Dornoch becomes his permanent home. The Board **agreed** that Alison phone Wilf to discuss his possible involvement and report back.

(ii) Various ways of increasing footfall and/or generating income from events/experiences were put forward:

- Donations versus charges for admission.

- Creating a Friends of Dornoch on a one-off or annual subscription basis.
- Forming a local Business Club,
- Imaginative programming such as using holograms and 2 way conversations using AI.
- Digital 'layering' of exhibits to make good use of small spaces.
- Having a basic entry fee and charging more for additional exhibitions.
- It was suggested that an Engagement post could take forward digital marketing.

Fiona McK attended an on line session by Expo North on driving footfall and will report back to the Museum Committee.

(iii) Fiona H suggested that some of the Highland/Dornoch tapestries could be displayed in the Heritage Hub. This was agreed and Lynne will liaise on this.

12. Date of next meeting – 12th March 2024, 10.30am at Whinhill.

13. Staff issues

a) Remuneration – 2024/5

The Board considered the Benchmarking paper on museum staff salaries in the Highlands. Richard pointed out that the Real Living Wage has increased (now £12 per hour) and it was noted that the SCIO was already paying all staff in excess of this figure before this increase was announced. Future increases can be expected. It **was agreed** that further discussion take place at the March Board meeting to consider the immediate situation for staff salaries and to plan for the future.

b) Revised Curator Contract

The Board considered an updated contract document prepared by Fiona McK. The main point for discussion was the annual leave entitlement. **It was agreed** that this remain at 24 days with an additional 4 days public holiday at Christmas and New Year. The suggestion that leave be split between the summer and winter seasons was agreed. It was agreed that if possible leave should be taken between Christmas and New Year when there were no planned events or activities.

Alison will consult Lynne on the revised Contract. Fiona will also revise the Museum Assistant and Outreach Worker contracts.